

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION
TO ESTABLISH 10-YEAR TERM
FOR TSA ADMINISTRATOR

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to establish a 10-year term of office for any individual appointed to serve as the administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, TSA, akin to the appointment process for the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI.

The failed Christmas Day bombing of a U.S. airliner points to the need for strong, capable leadership at TSA. It is essential that the agency be independent of political influence and focus on its core mission: to protect "the Nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce." Given the continued threat from al Qaeda to U.S. and international aviation, it is essential that the TSA administrator has bipartisan support.

I believe a 10-year term for the administrator of TSA will help provide the agency with the qualified, long-term and independent leadership it needs at this time. Over the last 9 years since TSA's creation following 9/11, TSA has had six administrators—averaging terms of just 1.5 years. This is hardly the stable and committed leadership that the agency should have, given its critical role in ensuring the safety of our citizens and aviation infrastructure. It simply does not make sense for the position to change hands with each new administration or even sooner.

This bill further strengthens our Nation's homeland by ensuring stable leadership at the Department of Homeland Security and freeing that the TSA administrator to assure agency professionalism over political fidelity. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

RECOGNITION FOR CHIEF ROBERT
W. GILBERT, U.S. BORDER PATROL

HON. GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Robert W. Gilbert, who is leaving his position as Chief Patrol Agent of the United States Border Patrol Tucson Sector to become the Department of Homeland Security Attaché in Mexico.

As the representative of one of only ten congressional districts on the U.S.-Mexico border, I have worked closely with Chief Gilbert in the ongoing effort to secure our border. Chief Gilbert has been relentless in his pursuit of this goal, and for that, every American owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude.

During his time in Tucson, Chief Gilbert never lost sight of the fact that our border is more than a boundary separating two nations. He knows that our border with Mexico is a conduit for trade through which hundreds of millions of dollars of vital goods and services flow each year. He is also acutely aware of the negative impact on local residents, ranch-

ers and businesses caused by the criminal cartels that smuggle people and drugs across the border and into our communities.

Chief Gilbert followed his father into the Border Patrol and has carried out assignments in San Diego, El Paso and on the Canadian border. In March 2007, he was named Chief Patrol Agent of the Tucson Sector, the Nation's largest and most active border region.

Chief Gilbert supervises more than 3,200 agents who patrol 262 miles of international border. The agents who work for him account for the highest number of drug seizures and illegal immigrant apprehensions in the Nation. Chief Gilbert has called the Tucson Sector "ground zero for the Border Patrol." When he was asked whether being assigned to such a busy part of the border was a reward or a punishment, Chief Gilbert called his posting "an honor." It has been no less an honor for those of us who have had the opportunity to work with him.

Representing the Eighth Congressional District in Southeastern Arizona, I have had the privilege of witnessing first-hand the Border Patrol's important work. It has been a highlight of my time in Congress to meet the men and women of the Tucson Sector of the Border Patrol who serve in one of the most challenging and rugged regions in our country.

Under Chief Gilbert's exceptional leadership, great progress has been achieved in making our border more secure. In just the first three months of fiscal year 2010, agents in the Tucson Sector arrested 51,111 people and seized 270,418 pounds of marijuana. In fiscal year 2009, agents in the Tucson Sector seized an all-time national record of more than 1.2 million pounds of marijuana.

It is clear on many levels that Chief Gilbert and the men and women under his command are gaining control of the most porous area of our border with Mexico.

In addition to implementing effective new strategies to deal with the high volume of drug and human smuggling, Chief Gilbert and his team have been most responsive to my inquiries on behalf of constituents and they have reached out to build positive relationships with local residents, ranchers and business owners. The Chief established regular meetings of community stakeholders which have resulted in stronger partnerships between the Border Patrol and the citizens who live along the border. He has gone to great lengths to establish better understanding and communications with the community including his mule ride along the border with area ranchers to directly inspect the effects that smuggling has had on their land and operations.

In a 2009 interview with Linda Valdez, a columnist with the Arizona Republic, Chief Gilbert talked about the enthusiasm he has for his job. "If you can't get excited about defending the United States of America, you don't have a pulse," he said.

Each day, the agents supervised by Chief Gilbert confront armed smugglers, harsh desert terrain and weather extremes to keep us safe. Each day, they and Chief Gilbert illustrate what it means to be dedicated to duty and to country.

While enormous credit rightfully goes to Chief Gilbert for Border Patrol successes since he arrived on the job, we also recognize the great sacrifices that have been made by his family. His wife Lia and children Matthew and Sophia have been there to support the

Chief through his many long days and week-ends at work. The strength of his family has played a vital role in sustaining the Chief in his tireless service to the Nation. We thank them for all they have done for him and, through him, for all of us.

On behalf of the people of Arizona's Eighth Congressional District, I am proud to give the highest commendation to Chief Robert W. Gilbert for a job very well done. This man is a true patriot, who has served our region and the Nation with selflessness, integrity and honor.

GRATITUDE FOR THE SERVICE OF
LASHAWN Y. WARREN

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank one of the most dedicated and productive members of the Judiciary Committee staff for her service to the House, LaShawn Warren. For 2½ years, LaShawn served as Oversight Counsel for the Committee on the Judiciary.

LaShawn graduated magna cum laude from Savannah State College in Savannah, Georgia. She earned her law degree from Howard University, where she served as co-editor-in-chief of the Social Justice Law Review and rose to the leadership ranks of many of the law school's societies and associations. In addition to her law degree, she earned a certificate in non-profit management from Georgetown University's Center for Professional Development.

Prior to joining the staff of the Judiciary Committee, LaShawn served as Legislative Counsel for Civil Rights for the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU. As Legislative Counsel, she prepared congressional testimony for the U.S. Congress and the United Nations Human Rights Council, UNHRC, and lobbied Members of Congress, UNHRC members, and their respective staffs on voting rights, education equity, racial profiling, employment, housing, domestic violence policy, welfare reform, privacy, international human rights, and civil rights enforcement. She chaired advocacy and legislative coalitions, worked with national and local media, and served as the lead strategist for the civil rights community's successful effort to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act in 2006. Prior to her tenure at the ACLU, she served as a legislative analyst for the Seattle City Council and as an Assistant Attorney General for the Washington State Office of the Attorney General.

During her time with the Judiciary Committee, LaShawn led the Congress' investigation into the enforcement of Federal civil rights laws, hiring practices, and resource management issues in the Civil Rights Division, CRT, of the Department of Justice. By the end of the 110th Congress, her work had exposed massive politicization of the CRT's operations, including its hiring practices and case-prosecution decisions. Cleaning up that division—so central to the equal rights of all Americans—is a great legacy of LaShawn's work at the Committee. She additionally served as the Committee's lead counsel on voting issues and conducted investigative and legislative